

# COVID-19 DEATHS IN UTAH

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

# OVERVIEW (WHY IS THE OME INVOLVED?)

- PART OF THE UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DIVISION OF DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION)
- 26-4-7. CUSTODY BY MEDICAL EXAMINER
- UPON NOTIFICATION UNDER SECTION 26-4-8 OR INVESTIGATION BY THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE, THE MEDICAL EXAMINER SHALL ASSUME CUSTODY OF A DECEASED BODY IF IT APPEARS THAT DEATH WAS:
  - (6) RESULTING FROM DISEASES THAT MAY CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH
- JURISDICTION IS BY LOCATION OF DEATH, NOT RESIDENCE



# HOW ARE DEATHS REPORTED TO THE OME?

- USUAL MEANS FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT OR HEALTHCARE FACILITIES
- DIRECTLY FROM CERTIFYING PHYSICIAN OR HEALTHCARE FACILITY STAFF
- FREQUENT UPDATES FROM EPIDEMIOLOGY AT UDOH
- INQUIRIES FROM COUNTY LEVEL HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF
- REFERRAL FROM OVRS FOR DEATHS CERTIFIED WITH COVID AS A CAUSE
- FUNERAL HOMES, FAMILY MEMBERS

# IS COVID-19 THE CAUSE OF DEATH?

- INVESTIGATION PROCEEDS ALONG USUAL OME PROCEDURAL LINES
  - AUTOPSY IN ISOLATION FOR SUSPICIOUS CASES NEEDING AUTOPSY FOR DETERMINATION
    - SOME REQUIRE ADDITIONAL TESTING TO RULE OUT OTHER POTENTIAL OR COMPETING CAUSES
  - REVIEW OF HISTORY, MEDICAL RECORDS, FOLLOW-UP WITH PHYSICIAN AND FAMILY
  - MOST CASES HANDLED WITH ATTENDING PHYSICIAN CERTIFYING AS DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE
- FINAL DETERMINATION MADE AFTER REVIEW OF INVESTIGATIVE INFORMATION



# POSTMORTEM TESTING FOR COVID-19

- ALL DECEDENTS BROUGHT TO THE OME ARE TESTED POSTMORTEM FOR COVID-19
  - REPRESENTS ABOUT 18% OF ALL DEATHS IN UTAH
- SOME DECEDENTS REPORTED ARE BROUGHT TO OME SPECIFICALLY FOR COVID-19 TESTING
- MANY POSITIVE RESULTS IN OBVIOUSLY NON-COVID-19 RELATED DEATHS

# WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT UTAH?

- STATEWIDE MEDICAL EXAMINER SYSTEM
- TESTING AVAILABILITY
- DEATH DATA THUS FAR ALL BASED ON TESTING



# DATA REPORTED TO UDOH EPIDEMIOLOGY

- DEATHS REPORTED AS THEY ARE REPORTED TO OME (USUALLY DAILY)
  - CONFIRMED
  - UNDER INVESTIGATION
  - NOT COVID-19 RELATED
- FOLLOW-UP ON CASES UNDER INVESTIGATION

# SUMMARY

- ALL COVID-19 DEATHS REPORTED TO OME
- DEATHS REPORTED BACK TO EPIDEMIOLOGY
- UTAH DEATHS REPORTED BASED ON TEST RESULTS